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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

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Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly resolution 65/133 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/1.

The report describes the major humanitarian trends and challenges over the past year and analyses two thematic issues of current concern: strengthening resilience, preparedness and capacities for humanitarian response; and humanitarian financing. The report provides an overview of current key processes to improve humanitarian coordination and ends with recommendations for the further strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 and responds to the requests contained in Assembly resolution 65/133 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/1. The period covered by the report is June 2010 to May 2011.

II. Overview of humanitarian trends and challenges

2. Twenty years after General Assembly resolution 46/182 laid out a framework for the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, humanitarian needs continue to increase as a result of new and ongoing conflicts, the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters and the impact of global challenges. Working in support of Governments and in close collaboration with humanitarian partners, the United Nations responded to more than 30 emergencies during the reporting period.

3. Complex emergencies continued to affect tens of millions of people, causing displacement both within and across borders. At the end of 2010, an estimated 27.5 million people remained internally displaced by armed conflict globally, representing an increase of 400,000 compared with 2009. Of these, up to 50 per cent were children, and many displaced persons were living in urban areas. Africa had the highest number of internally displaced persons, an estimated 11.1 million. Despite the fact that the overall number of displaced persons was steadily rising, at least 2.1 million were able to return home in 2010. The number of refugees under the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had increased by an estimated 140,000 to 10.5 million by the end of 2010. New or renewed conflicts across sub-Saharan Africa, in particular in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire, accounted for this increase. Some 14.7 million internally displaced persons were being protected and/or assisted by UNHCR at the end of 2010.

4. An increase in the number of natural disasters was recorded in 2010. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters reported that 373 natural disasters occurred (compared with 328 recorded in 2009), killing nearly 297,000 people, affecting almost 208 million others and causing an estimated $110 billion in damages. The number of people affected increased significantly from 113 million in 2009, owing to the growing scale of the disasters, in part as a result of climate change. According to the World Meteorological Organization, global surface temperatures reached record values in 2010 (as they had in 1998 and 2005), while global land rainfall also peaked.

5. The combined impact of global challenges and trends — such as climate change, food and energy price volatility, macroeconomic trends, irregular migration, rapid population growth, urbanization and environmental degradation — continues to exacerbate vulnerability and increase humanitarian needs. More than 3.3 billion people — the majority of the world's population — live in urban areas, with more than 1 billion living in slums and informal settlements, which makes them particularly vulnerable to humanitarian crises. Droughts and floods in key food-producing countries contributed to rapid and sustained increases in international food prices from the middle of 2010. In the second half of 2010, food

price increases, compounded by fuel price spikes, resulted in a net increase of some 44 million in the number of people in low and middle income countries living in extreme poverty. The increase in food prices also led to a deepening of poverty for many of the 1.2 billion people who were already living below the extreme poverty line of $1.25 a day. Increases in the prices of food and other commodities are contributing to unrest in an increasing number of countries, but it is generally difficult to separate that factor from others.

A. Complex emergencies

6. In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the security situation remains extremely volatile, resulting in a serious humanitarian situation. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as at 7 May, at least 710,408 people, 263,290 of them foreign migrant workers, had left the country. Inside the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, there is ongoing concern about the protection of civilians in areas of intense fighting, and there are reports of 200,000 displaced people, most of them living with host families.

7. It is estimated that the recent political turmoil in Yemen has led to the deaths of 135 people, including 26 children, and the injury of 2,656, including 800 children. Even before the recent protests, humanitarian needs in Yemen were widespread and growing. Challenges include insecurity in the north, lack of sustained access to thousands of internally displaced persons and widespread and worrying levels of food insecurity and malnutrition. Protracted conflict in the north has led to the displacement of 300,000 people.

8. Despite the easing by Israel of the blockade on Gaza, access by the population to sources of livelihood remained limited, owing to a large extent to the ongoing restrictions on the import of primary construction materials and the export of goods, as well as on people's access to farming land and fishing areas within Gaza and its sea waters. As a result, the majority of the population continues to suffer from food insecurity and remains dependent on food assistance. In Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, there is inadequate planning by the Israeli authorities to meet the basic housing and infrastructure needs of Palestinian residents. This has resulted in poor services and living conditions, as well as in the continuous exposure of thousands of families living in houses without Israeli-issued permits to the risk of demolition and displacement.

9. In Iraq, the United Nations and its partners continue to address the needs of particularly vulnerable groups. The United Nations estimates that there are still 1.3 million Iraqi internally displaced persons, and hundreds of thousands of refugees living in neighbouring countries. Gradual improvements inside Iraq have not yet reached a level that enables large-scale voluntary and sustainable returns.

10. In Afghanistan, humanitarian needs as a result of both conflict and natural disasters remain high. While in some instances access for non-governmental organizations has improved, humanitarian access has deteriorated on the whole, owing to increased security incidents, in particular in the north and north-east of the country. The humanitarian response was significantly hampered by insecurity, including attacks against humanitarian workers, in particular the attack against the United Nations compound in Mazar-e-Sharif on 1 April 2011, in which seven United Nations staff and security officers were killed. The number of security incidents

increased by 19 per cent compared with 2009. Conflict-induced displacement was on the rise in 2010 and early 2011, resulting in an estimated 360,000 internally displaced persons, 102,000 of whom have been newly displaced since 2009. A significant number (perhaps 40 per cent) of Afghan returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan are still in need of reintegration support and many (perhaps 28 per cent) are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

11. Although the response to the 2010 monsoon floods dominated humanitarian efforts in Pakistan during the reporting period, humanitarian organizations continue to provide emergency and early recovery assistance to conflict-affected populations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. While a large number of internally displaced persons have returned to their homes, significant humanitarian needs persist, as approximately 820,000 people remain displaced in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and at least 1 million people inside the Federally Administered Tribal Areas continue to require early recovery support in order to further promote the process of their return.

12. The Central African Republic continues to face serious humanitarian challenges. The number of internally displaced persons has risen to 192,000 owing to renewed violence in parts of the north and attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the east. In neighbouring Chad, 262,000 Sudanese refugees remain in need of humanitarian assistance. Internal displacement also remains an issue there, with 130,000 internally displaced persons still in camps. Chad was one of the countries worst affected by the Sahel food crisis, which caused up to 1.6 million people to be food-insecure.

13. Côte d'Ivoire was plunged into a political crisis following the holding of the second round of presidential elections on 28 November 2010, triggering widespread unrest which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people and injuries to many more. By mid-April, up to 1 million people had been internally displaced and many Ivorians had fled to neighbouring countries, in particular Liberia, where more than 130,000 people sought refuge. While safe access to the affected populations and the protection of civilians were among the major humanitarian issues for Côte d'Ivoire, poor infrastructure and the scattering of refugees in hard-to-access border communities represented important operational challenges in Liberia.

14. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains serious, with a total of 1.7 million internally displaced persons. In North and South Kivu, persistent violence by armed groups resulted in large-scale humanitarian needs, and an estimated 1.3 million people remained displaced in the Kivus alone. Humanitarian access to the affected populations continued to be extremely challenging. An estimated 120,000 people from Equateur Province, who fled to the Congo and the Central African Republic as a result of local ethnic conflict in late 2009 and in 2010, have yet to return. LRA continued to terrorize people across vast remote areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 251 persons killed in 2010 alone. An estimated 380,000 persons remained displaced in LRA-affected areas across the Central African Republic, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

15. It is estimated that, in the Darfur region of the Sudan, in addition to the existing 1.9 million internally displaced persons, more than 70,000 people may have been displaced as a result of renewed violence. Insecurity, a new wave of expulsions of staff of humanitarian organizations and bureaucratic impediments further

restricted humanitarian access. The Southern Sudan self-determination referendum proceeded peacefully in January 2011, and 300,000 southerners returned from the North before and after it was held. However, intercommunal conflict, attacks by LRA and clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and militia groups, which have become increasingly active since the referendum, have reportedly displaced 154,000 people in total and killed at least 1,400 people.

16. Ongoing conflict, food insecurity and the effects of drought have severely affected the livelihoods and coping mechanisms of people in Somalia. Significant numbers of people have continued to leave Somalia to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Currently, some 2.4 million Somalis, or 32 per cent of the population, need humanitarian assistance and livelihood support. Restrictions on aid operations by armed groups hinder the ability of humanitarian agencies to operate. The conflict is generating significant civilian casualties owing to the lack of compliance by all parties with their obligations under international law.

17. Despite the gradual move towards recovery in Zimbabwe, more than 1.7 million people required food aid during the peak hunger season (January to March), while various vulnerable groups will continue to require targeted humanitarian assistance. Access to safe water and sanitation remains a problem for millions, and the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate remains one of the highest in the world.

18. In Colombia, 111,684 people were displaced in 2010 as a result of armed conflict and activities by groups that emerged following the demobilization process. According to official sources, the number of internally displaced persons in Colombia is among the highest in the world, at 3.6 million.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

19. Several geophysical disasters brought destruction during the reporting period. On 11 March 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake hit the north-eastern region of Japan, followed by a 10-metre-high tsunami. As at 1 May, the Government had confirmed that 14,704 had died, 5,278 had been injured and 10,969 were missing. The subsequent difficulties at the Fukushima nuclear power plant caused an increase in the radiation levels in the surrounding areas. As at 28 April, 168,901 persons remained evacuated from the affected areas. In New Zealand, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit on 22 February 2011, causing 166 deaths and destroying and damaging more than 100,000 homes. In Indonesia, the Mount Merapi volcano erupted twice in October-November, resulting in 386 deaths and the displacement of 410,388 people. On 25 October 2010, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the Mentawai islands, followed by a tsunami which killed 460 and displaced 15,353 people and destroyed thousands of houses.

20. In Haiti, the ongoing efforts to recover from the devastating earthquake of January 2010 were further hampered by a cholera outbreak which began in October 2010. By May 2011, the epidemic had stabilized in many areas and the mortality rate had declined to 1.7 per cent nationwide; the epidemic had caused over 4,800 deaths, with a total of more than 280,000 cases. Hurricane Tomas, which developed in late October 2010 and had become a tropical storm by the time it reached Haiti, caused less damage and disruption to humanitarian efforts than expected. More than 600,000 people still live in camps in the wake of the earthquake.

21. The 2010 monsoon season caused the worst floods in the history of Pakistan, affecting more than 20.5 million people (10 per cent of the population), destroying more than 1.8 million homes and devastating over 2.4 million hectares of crops. Many of those who were displaced have returned to their areas of origin, although support gaps remain in various sectors. In Sri Lanka, unprecedented levels of rainfall in early 2011 caused floods, landslides and displacement in the eastern and central parts, affecting 1.2 million people; more than 1 million were displaced at the peak of the floods. In Australia, the worst flooding in 50 years, compounded by the effects of Cyclone Yasi, caused 20 deaths and affected millions of people. Torrential rainfall resulted in flooding in Thailand and Viet Nam in October, affecting more than 477,000 and 210,000 households, respectively. In Colombia, the heaviest rainfall on record triggered deadly floods and landslides that had affected more than 2 million people by the end of 2010. Many other countries and regions were affected by a number of small- and medium-scale disasters related to rainfall, tropical storms, droughts and extreme weather events.

22. Almost 2 million people were affected by Typhoon Megi, which struck the Philippines on 18 October, destroying 30,206 houses and damaging 115,584 others. Also in October, Cyclone Giri struck Myanmar, affecting 260,000 people and leaving 100,000 homeless.

23. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the food security situation has deteriorated and a United Nations assessment in March 2011 found that 6.1 million people would be in need of food assistance between May and September 2011. Among the many factors that contributed to the deteriorating food security situation were natural hazards, including the heavy rains and floods experienced in mid-2010 and the severe weather in the winter of 2010/11. Significant needs were also reported in the health, water and sanitation sectors.

24. The regional flood and cyclone season began in Southern Africa with heavy rains, resulting in the highest river levels in decades in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Thanks to the strengthening of national early warning systems and improved intergovernmental cooperation on emergency preparedness and response through the Southern Africa Development Community, the impact of the flooding was not as severe as anticipated. More than 1.6 million people were affected by extreme rainfall and flooding in West Africa. The Niger, already beset by a prolonged drought and associated acute food shortages, suffered further owing to flash floods in July 2010, while in Benin torrential rains and the worst flooding in 50 years affected 680,000 people and rendered hundreds of thousands homeless. La Niña-induced drought conditions and food insecurity affected approximately 80 per cent of the population of Eritrea and 2.8 million people in Ethiopia. In Kenya, 1.6 million people required humanitarian assistance as a result of recurrent drought, conflict and localized flooding. The rise in global surface temperatures became evident in the Russian Federation, where a devastating heat wave affected millions and triggered massive forest and peat fires in the summer of 2010.

III. Current challenges

25. Predictions that the population will reach 8 billion in 2025 (increasing mostly in the developing world), that a 50 per cent increase in food production will be

required by 2030, that there will be a 50 per cent increase in energy consumption by 2030 and that safe water could be inaccessible to almost 50 per cent of the world's population by 2025 suggest that there will likely be significant increases in vulnerability and humanitarian needs in the regions most affected. The United Nations and its partners will have to continuously adapt to this changing world, in particular through strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders, especially Governments. Increasingly, this will mean a shift from a reactive system that responds to emergencies to a more prepared and anticipatory system with stronger links to Governments and local structures as well as development actors. Humanitarian financing mechanisms will also need to be adapted to ensure predictable and adequate funding to meet increased humanitarian needs and to address gaps in such areas as supporting preparedness activities and enabling an effective transition between relief and longer-term recovery.

A. Strengthening resilience, preparedness and capacities for humanitarian response

26. Preparedness for emergency response saves lives when emergencies occur because it permits faster scaling-up of an effective, principled and coordinated humanitarian response at the local, national and international levels. Requirements for emergency response preparedness are likely to increase as global risks and trends continue to exacerbate vulnerability. Large-scale humanitarian emergencies, such as the earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan in 2010, demonstrate the urgency of ensuring an adequate level of preparedness in disaster-prone countries. The impact of preparedness and prevention is difficult to measure. However, the earthquakes in Japan and Chile in early 2011 clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of preparedness in saving lives; the consequences could have been even more severe than they were. Similarly, while floods and other hydrometeorological disasters cannot be avoided, the systematic upgrading of preparedness measures, plans and response capacities, including in Bangladesh, Mozambique and some countries in the Caribbean, have resulted in significantly reduced loss of life and livelihoods.

27. It is generally understood that preparedness for emergency response entails measures and activities in advance of emergencies to establish capacities and mechanisms for rapid and effective response during emergencies. The primary responders are national and local authorities. As outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/182, the international community should assist countries in strengthening their response capacities. In order to be effective, international preparedness efforts must reinforce national and local response capacities and support existing national and local institutions and communities. At the same time, humanitarian organizations should continue to improve their own response capacities in order to carry out their functions as effectively as possible. There is also a need to increase clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various actors engaged in preparedness.

28. The Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted by Member States in 2005, in particular under its priority 5, advocates strengthening preparedness for response at all levels and highlights the essential role that preparedness can play in saving lives and livelihoods, especially when clearly anchored in a comprehensive national disaster risk reduction strategy. Efforts to build the local capacities of disaster-prone and disaster-affected communities must be intensified and existing national and

local capacities incorporated into humanitarian coordination systems, as the larger humanitarian system also better equips itself for a future of greater risk, uncertainty and demand.

Developing response capacity for preparedness at the regional, national and local levels

29. The United Nations system continues to work on increasing support to Governments and regional organizations for preparedness, in particular in disaster-prone regions. One example is the implementation of minimum preparedness measures at the national and regional levels. In the Southern Africa region, humanitarian partners have been working with the Southern African Development Community secretariat to provide training to member States, develop common tools, policies and strategies for region-wide application for preparedness and reach agreement on hazard scenarios to facilitate planning at the national and regional levels. The United Nations is also conducting simulation exercises in Africa designed to enhance the operability of regional logistics networks.

30. In the Asia-Pacific region, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is currently piloting a country-level integrated preparedness package for emergency response. Following the identification of specific preparedness needs in target countries, the Office aims to provide support to humanitarian partners and Governments in key areas such as the establishment of coordination structures, contingency planning, data preparedness and needs assessment readiness. This approach is aimed at delivering comprehensive preparedness support that creates a clear linkage between preparedness actions and positive humanitarian response outcomes. Similarly, the United Nations and partners have organized training sessions on humanitarian response and coordination tools for organizations in the Gulf region. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs developed a concise guide for Governments, outlining international response mechanisms and services at their disposal in case of disasters, and supported training for humanitarian country team members and Government representatives from various countries across the region, facilitating information exchange and a common understanding of emergency response tools and processes.

31. In West Africa, humanitarian agencies have recently come together under the Strategic Partnership for Preparedness; the pilot project was implemented during 2010 with regional stakeholders. Capacity-development activities are undertaken in-country, supported by regional and global partners. In the first pilot country, Ghana, the emergency preparedness and response capacity assessment performed in October 2010 led to revised United Nations Development Assistance Framework components in January 2011, to an action plan for 2011-2012 based on five key recommendations and to a national simulation exercise, conducted in May 2011.

32. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee principals agreed in February 2011 that the Committee should place a greater emphasis on preparedness and disaster risk reduction. In 2011, the members of the Committee's Sub-Working Group on Preparedness will support national contingency planning processes in a selected number of countries. As of April 2011, Ghana, Nepal, Uganda and Haiti had been selected as initial pilot countries. The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery of the World Bank has also pledged to provide technical and financial support for disaster preparedness and risk reduction in a number of high-risk

countries. The Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative is another example of an inter-agency effort to provide advisory services, technical guidance and training and to exchange knowledge.

33. It is essential to strengthen the analysis of early warning information at the national and international levels through cooperation among States and partnerships between United Nations entities and research institutions. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee "Early Warning — Early Action" report is published three times a year and an updated version of the Humanitarian Early Warning Service was launched, with enhanced early warning information on natural hazards.

Strengthening international networks and mechanisms for a more efficient response

34. Existing global networks and inter-agency frameworks, such as the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team and United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord), have continued to support Governments in their response to disasters. INSARAG guidelines and methodologies have now been adopted by the majority of the world's international urban search and rescue responders. In 2010, the UNDAC team organized two disaster response preparedness missions and conducted 10 emergency missions. Approximately 250 disaster managers are available for UNDAC missions. Under the UN-CMCoord framework, which provides for coordination between the humanitarian and military communities, a combination of training and familiarization modules has been delivered, thereby preparing a variety of humanitarian and military actors for emergency response. Similarly, the agreement reached in the context of the Asia-Pacific Conference on Military Assistance to Disaster Relief Operations includes strategic guidance, as well as a frame of reference, for humanitarian organizations and Government counterparts regarding the engagement of military actors in support of humanitarian response.

35. The United Nations continued its cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in encouraging and supporting Governments to make use of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance. During the reporting period, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued its collaboration with the Federation and the Inter-Parliamentary Union with a view to developing model domestic legislation for enhanced preparedness for emergency response and the more efficient facilitation and regulation of international disaster assistance.

Preparedness in the context of increasing vulnerabilities

36. It is now widely accepted that global challenges, such as climate change, food and energy price volatility, macroeconomic trends, irregular migration, rapid population growth, urbanization and environmental degradation, are contributing to increasing vulnerability and humanitarian need, as well as a rapidly changing landscape for humanitarian organizations.

37. In order to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts resulting from global challenges, humanitarian actors increasingly seek to analyse and monitor them and their effects on vulnerability to anticipate where and when humanitarian caseloads

may emerge or increase. This information can then be used to make more timely and appropriate interventions, including contingency planning, building national response capacity and other preparedness activities. Owing to the complexity of these trends, humanitarian actors will increasingly need to enter into partnerships with local authorities and other stakeholders, development and specialist agencies, international financial institutions and research organizations to improve their access to high-quality analysis and their understanding of community resilience and existing coping mechanisms.

38. During the reporting period, agencies continued to improve monitoring and analysis of global challenges that have an impact on humanitarian needs and situations. For example, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed its first strategy and action plan for meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas. Humanitarian agencies working with development partners through the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis worked to undertake joint analysis of the impacts of high prices on vulnerable people and to prioritize mitigation actions.

B. Humanitarian financing

39. Despite the effects of the global recession, in 2010 humanitarian aid contributions from Member States and the private sector continued to increase. At least 140 countries, as well as private sector organizations and individuals, contributed towards a total of $15.6 billion[1] in funding both within and outside the consolidated appeals process framework. This represented an increase of $4 billion compared with the funding levels reported in 2009 and is in part accounted for by the high levels of support for humanitarian emergencies in Haiti and Pakistan. A growing number of Member States are providing resources for humanitarian action, including some that are aid recipients themselves. However, overall funding in relation to need (as measured by contributions to the consolidated appeals process) declined from 73 per cent in 2006 to 63 per cent in 2010.

40. As set out in the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, donors are encouraged to continue to work together to collectively allocate funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments, as well as to provide funding in a flexible manner so that agencies on the ground can provide assistance where it is needed most. While the Central Emergency Response Fund window for underfunded crises had an important levelling effect on discrepancies across sectors, more should be done to ensure that all sectors are adequately resourced with unearmarked contributions.

Improvements to the humanitarian financing system

41. Almost 20 years since General Assembly resolution 46/182 created the consolidated appeals process and the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (the precursor to the Central Emergency Response Fund), Member States and the United Nations and its partners continue to make progress towards greater predictability and efficiency in humanitarian financing. Predictable humanitarian financing includes the availability of sufficient unearmarked funds to allow a flexible, needs-based allocation of resources and rapid access to additional funds when

[1] As recorded by the Financial Tracking Service (http://fts.unocha.org/) as at 11 April 2011.

necessary. Improvements have been achieved in terms of both the level and scope of funding provided by Member States and the tools and mechanisms available to mobilize, coordinate and allocate resources.

42. Among the financing mechanisms established in recent years are pooled funds, including the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds, namely, common humanitarian funds and emergency response funds, as well as other mechanisms, such as the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Additional innovative mechanisms, such as the advance financing systems that allow for internal borrowing used by some United Nations agencies, funds and programmes greatly enhance agency response times in an emergency situation.

43. Multilateral pooled funds are mechanisms by means of which donors provide unearmarked contributions to a common source from which allocations are made according to commonly defined strategic priorities, thereby contributing to increasingly adequate, timely and flexible funding for humanitarian activities. Between 2006 and 2010, humanitarian pooled funding mechanisms (both Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based funds) received more than $3.8 billion, accounting for approximately 7 per cent of the total humanitarian contributions made during the period.

44. In 2010, the accountability and effectiveness of these funding mechanisms were further strengthened. The roll-out of the Performance and Accountability Framework for the Central Emergency Response Fund is expected to provide an overview of the impact of the Fund at the country level. Furthermore, a comprehensive evaluation of the Fund following its first five years in operation is currently under way. The monitoring of country-based pooled funds has also been strengthened. An evaluation of common humanitarian funds was finalized in March 2011. The production of annual reports and standardized agreements and reporting will further enhance the transparency of those funds.

45. The consolidated appeals process has evolved significantly over the years. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that needs assessments are closely aligned with the process, country strategies and the overall programme cycle. For example, consolidated appeals process planning tools will be aligned with the outcomes of coordinated needs assessments. This will facilitate the use of requirements as a basis for developing programmes and projects and to cover needs without gaps and overlaps. Funding through established mechanisms, such as consolidated appeals process and pooled funds, contributes to improved predictability, strengthens the prioritization and allocation of resources on the basis of need and enhances accountability against collective results. Enhancing needs-based allocation also remains among the priority themes of the Good Humanitarian Donorship group.

46. Despite these major improvements to the humanitarian financing system, challenges remain in ensuring that the structure is able to effectively respond to current and future trends affecting humanitarian assistance. The financing of emergency preparedness remains an area of concern for the United Nations and its partners. Furthermore, in situations in countries emerging from conflict and fragility, sustained efforts are required to ensure the timely availability of development funding and that appropriate financing mechanisms are in place to support transition and early recovery. Further efforts are required to make better use of the resources and capacities that exist within civil society.

Funding for preparedness

47. Despite widespread recognition of the need to strengthen the capacity of Governments and local communities to prevent and prepare for humanitarian crises, funding for preparedness is often ad hoc and inconsistent. Appropriate and well-resourced financing mechanisms need to be put in place to fund preparedness activities. Donors are encouraged to provide predictable resources for preparedness measures. At the same time, Governments and local actors in disaster-prone countries are encouraged to strengthen their preparedness measures, while international actors should continue supporting them in accessing appropriate financing mechanisms. Although this should focus primarily on the use of development assistance funding for preparedness and risk reduction, it will also require efforts by humanitarian partners to dedicate to preparedness some resources received through appeals.

48. A task team under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Financing Group is currently working to track and stimulate funding for preparedness through existing United Nations humanitarian funding mechanisms. In-country case studies designed to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of investing in preparedness and to highlight further practical solutions for improving preparedness funding are also being undertaken in close collaboration with interested Member States and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Preparedness.

Transition financing

49. Adequate funding for situations of conflict and fragility saves lives, but it can also help to build the foundations for sustainable recovery, peace and national capacity. Despite significant contributions from Member States for assistance to conflict-affected States, the amount of resources dedicated to supporting transition has not been sufficient. Funding for recovery activities is often delayed and limited, which in turn leads to the extension of humanitarian programmes.

50. The United Nations and its partners, including the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, are developing system-wide guidance for future improvements in this area. In addition, the United Nations is working with members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development through the International Network on Conflict and Fragility to develop transition financing guidance hinged on promoting national priorities driven by respective Governments in partnership with donors, the multilateral system and its partners. This work is supported by the task team on financing and aid effectiveness within the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues of the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, in coordination with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Financing Group. The main objective of the new guidance is to ensure the more efficient use of financial assistance by bringing together funding streams and various aid instruments in the most effective way.

51. While these initiatives help to improve the humanitarian financing system in response to current and future challenges, more needs to be done. Increased raising of awareness about growing needs is required to continue to mobilize donor support among Member States and the private sector. United Nations entities and partners are encouraged to support Member States in facilitating multilateral humanitarian

funding. New funding opportunities through regional and global entities, such as international financial institutions, should also be explored. Given that the global economic situation makes for a difficult humanitarian financing environment, Member States, the United Nations and partners will need to strengthen partnerships to deliver measurable results with the greatest impact to people in need through increasing the quantity and quality of funding.

IV. Progress in the coordination of humanitarian assistance

A. Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance

Capacity and coordination in the field

52. In the past several years, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners were challenged to respond to a number of large-scale emergencies. The scale of the disasters in Haiti and Pakistan stretched the capacity of the humanitarian community to its limits. A number of common themes relating to the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance emerged from evaluations of these responses, including with regard to coordination.

53. Evaluation findings demonstrated the importance of ensuring the availability of resources needed for the comprehensive humanitarian response, foreseen in flash appeals. Dedicated human and financial resources — including commitments from donors — are needed to fulfil crucial roles in intra-cluster and inter-cluster coordination and to facilitate such vital processes as joint needs assessments and response strategies.

54. The involvement of national actors and affected populations in the coordination and provision of humanitarian response is necessary to ensure that humanitarian actors can respond adequately to real needs and protect the dignity of the affected population. However, recent evaluations unanimously concluded that the participation of national actors or affected populations in humanitarian response has been limited, and that this remains an important area for improvement. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on the Cluster Approach addresses issues such as working more effectively with national partners, ensuring greater participation of international and national non-governmental organizations and establishing coordination mechanisms for transition.

55. The findings of evaluations conducted in 2010 indicate that the cluster approach has had a positive effect on the quality of humanitarian response and in facilitating coordination efforts between the international community and Governments. The introduction of the cluster approach has strengthened leadership predictability and partnership among United Nations agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IOM and international non-governmental organizations. However, further improvements could be made to improve coordination. In addition, the ever-increasing number of humanitarian actors, as evidenced in particular in large-scale emergencies such as that in Haiti, requires that efforts be made to further strengthen leadership, streamline coordination mechanisms and increase commitment, accountability and transparency on the part of cluster members, and provide strong and disciplined intra- and inter-cluster coordination.

Enhancing humanitarian leadership

56. During the reporting period, the challenges posed to the humanitarian system by the series of large-scale disasters that occurred and by continuing protracted emergencies reinforced the argument that strong and predictable leadership are essential to an effective response. Key areas where progress needs to be made include strengthening the knowledge, skills and experience of resident coordinators and humanitarian coordinators, reinforcing the support provided to them and solidifying the mechanisms that they have at their disposal.

57. Well-trained and well-placed humanitarian coordinators are of the utmost importance; training initiatives and efforts to strengthen the pool of humanitarian coordinators, which has grown to include 39 individuals, need to be continued. Strengthening the effective performance management of humanitarian coordinators and resident coordinators performing humanitarian coordination functions is an area of increased focus. Sufficient and more predictable support should be provided to a number of resident coordinators working in disaster-prone countries so as to enable them to lead and coordinate both preparedness and response efforts. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee recently published a handbook for resident and humanitarian coordinators, which outlines the key actions they should take to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

58. The effectiveness of resident and humanitarian coordinators also depends on the capacity of the humanitarian country teams, members of which should strengthen their in-country management teams as necessary, in particular in the event of large-scale crises. Discussions are under way to establish a system under which humanitarian country teams would undertake peer reviews, as well as a performance framework for humanitarian action, through which the progressive achievement of collective results could be monitored and reported. The achievement of collective results must be in line with efforts aimed at improving accountability to affected populations.

Accountability to affected people

59. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners are increasing their accountability to affected populations. Affected populations are at the centre of humanitarian action, and their active participation is essential in providing assistance in ways that best meet their needs. Recent disasters have further highlighted the need for response organizations to prioritize consultation and communication with disaster-affected communities. United Nations entities and humanitarian partners are instituting internal accountability mechanisms to ensure that affected populations and local organizations are involved and consulted.

60. With the widespread availability of cost-effective technologies, a number of new approaches are being explored, such as the use of mobile telephones, call centres, free open-source software, social networking and technical and volunteer communities. In addition, several important initiatives, such as the 2011 revised Sphere Handbook,[2] by non-governmental organization partners, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and United Nations entities, as well as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership initiative, offer tools,

[2] Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, The Sphere Project, 2011.

guidelines and a rigorous voluntary certification scheme to ensure that programme delivery complies with the highest standards.

61. Strengthening the role of clusters in using and promoting participatory approaches has been prioritized in the 2011 workplan of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on the Cluster Approach. Under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, principals of Inter-Agency Standing Committee members have committed their organizations to building into their internal practices the inclusion of affected people in programme planning and review, and the facilitation of the provision of feedback on the services offered by Inter-Agency Standing Committee organizations.

Harmonizing needs assessments

62. Harmonized and coordinated needs assessments are essential to improve the effectiveness of aid delivery to beneficiaries and accountability to stakeholders. They facilitate a shared analysis of the humanitarian situation by applying consistent methodologies and indicators and help ensure that gaps and duplication are minimized when conducting assessments with the affected population. To this end, the United Nations and its partners, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Needs Assessment Task Force, finalized the operational guidance on coordinated assessments in emergencies, which provides a framework and tools for the coordination of needs assessments and the consolidation of assessment information.

63. While the guidance underscores the overall responsibilities of national authorities, it is aimed primarily at humanitarian country teams, cluster lead agencies and humanitarian organizations. Its implementation should support the formulation of appeals and strengthen linkages to post-conflict and disaster assessment efforts. The guidance is also applicable for emergencies not covered by an appeal, as well as preparedness contexts. The framework further provides a set of standardized indicators and tools, a data-consolidation tool, referred to as the "humanitarian dashboard", and a multi-cluster initial rapid assessment methodology that seeks to reach, within the first few days of an emergency, a shared understanding of the humanitarian situation, its scale and severity, and its likely evolution.

64. With support from an expanding standby capacity of needs assessment experts, the operational guidance and tools are being piloted during 2011 in at least four humanitarian emergency and four preparedness contexts. Guidance and tools will be adjusted on the basis of feedback from the field and lessons learned.

Emergency rules and procedures of the Secretariat for rapid humanitarian response

65. An integral part of effective humanitarian action is timely response. In 2010, the response of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to humanitarian emergencies, including the earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan, demonstrated the value of recent efforts to strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy staff quickly and flexibly. The Roster Management Programme enabled 85 per cent of field recruitments and a 12 per cent reduction of field vacancy rates. The average time for field selection was further reduced from 75 to 51 days, and transition from surge support to long-term staff planning was improved through enhanced internal and external coordination. More than 600 people were placed on

the roster. A new surge mechanism, the Associates Surge Pool, allowed for pre-cleared consultants and independent contractors to be deployed at short notice to cover interim staffing gaps, complementing the existing Emergency Response Roster and Standby Partnerships Programme. Altogether, those surge mechanisms provided for a total of 121 deployments over and above surge from regional offices.

66. In order to allow field staff to be more adequately and rapidly equipped, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in partnership with the United Nations Office at Geneva, launched "Acquisition Planning", a real-time online procurement database which enables the purchase of goods and services faster and in a more standardized fashion. The centralized rapid deployment stock, which serves as an internal strategic stockpile of operational support equipment and materials, has become fully operational. In 2010, it proved vital to the immediate mobilization of critical support equipment during emergencies.

Improving humanitarian civil-military coordination and the use of military assets

67. Recent experience in large-scale emergencies demonstrated the unique capabilities afforded by military actors, who are often well positioned to help support humanitarian action. The earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan served as a reminder that militaries can contribute timely, appropriate and unique assets to assist in the initial phases of humanitarian emergency response.

68. However, the challenges in maintaining the civilian character of humanitarian assistance remain, and are often amplified as a result of the provision of bilateral foreign military assistance. It is imperative that the provision of military assets to support humanitarian action take place in an appropriate, predictable and complementary manner so as to ensure that humanitarian needs can be addressed wherever they arise and in line with humanitarian principles.

69. The cornerstones of such principled humanitarian civil-military coordination are described in internationally established guidelines, and Member States should continue to recognize and adhere to their principles. While humanitarian actors continue to advocate that the Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief and the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (MCDA Guidelines) be part of national policy and military doctrine, Member States and military actors should focus on deploying military assets to address specific needs identified by the humanitarian community, as a last resort, respecting international guidelines and national guidance and in support of humanitarian action. These tenets have been applied in the Libyan context, where, although to date no requests for military support have been made, civil-military coordination has been effective, for example through deconfliction by exchanging information with armed actors to avoid potential hazards for humanitarian personnel.

70. Throughout the reporting period, UN-CMCoord has continued to provide for principled coordination between humanitarian and military actors through information-sharing, the avoidance of competition and, when appropriate, the pursuit of common goals. Recent experiences in coordinating with military actors have significantly increased the interest of Member States and generated proposals for new initiatives in support of effective humanitarian civil-military coordination. Steps will need to be taken to improve such coordination by addressing identified

gaps, including through the expansion of a pool of trained experts, increased training and enhanced dialogue between humanitarian and military/armed actors, a more effective, predictable and rapid civil-military interface in emergency response operations, and the further operationalization of the Oslo and MCDA Guidelines by developing contextual, country-specific guidance.

B. Strengthening compliance with humanitarian principles and access to populations

71. Humanitarian action should be conducted solely on the basis of need and in line with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Unfortunately, the ability of humanitarian actors to maintain a presence and safe and secure access to populations in need continues to be severely jeopardized in several humanitarian crisis situations. Constraints on access involve bureaucratic constraints, active hostilities, attacks on humanitarian personnel and the theft of assets.

72. Active hostilities in situations of armed conflict also pose challenges to safe and timely access to people in need. This underlines the importance of engagement by humanitarian actors with all parties to conflict in order to develop and implement measures to facilitate access during active hostilities. These include the creation of humanitarian corridors by parties to conflict, temporary suspensions of hostilities to allow the provision of urgent assistance to the affected population or the evacuation of civilians.

73. Violence directed at humanitarian personnel and facilities is both politically and economically motivated and is particularly debilitating for humanitarian operations. Over the past decade, major attacks — resulting in death, kidnapping and serious injury — against humanitarian relief personnel have tripled, reaching over 100 assaults a year every year since 2006. While international personnel face a higher incident rate per capita than national staff, the latter, who constitute over 90 per cent of staff in the field, have borne the brunt of security risks.

74. In 2010, a study by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs[3] reviewed good practice with regard to how humanitarian agencies in complex security environments can maintain presence and reach affected populations to deliver life-saving services and provide protection. Humanitarian actors on the ground have developed innovative risk management strategies — based on acceptance and complemented by security measures — including alternatives to "bunkerization", that have enabled them to maintain presence in proximity to affected communities. Proactive promotion of acceptance by building good relations with local communities constitutes a cornerstone of sound risk management. Acceptance-based approaches are a process rather than an event, and require sustained dialogue with all stakeholders — including all parties to a conflict — for which the support of Member States is essential. The principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence remain the core tenets of everyday humanitarian action on the ground.

75. Underpinning this enabling approach is an attitudinal shift from risk aversion to risk management that needs to take place at all decision-making levels and is now

[3] To Stay and Deliver, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2010.

reflected in the United Nations security management framework, which has progressed from a "when to leave" approach to one of "how to stay". In keeping with the principle that there should be "no programme without security" and "no security without resources",[4] security management — one of the most underfunded programme components — as well as measures to fulfil the duty towards care of national staff and local partners, need to be made an integral part of humanitarian appeal processes and programming.

C. Addressing gender equality and prevention of and response to gender-based violence in humanitarian action

76. Effective humanitarian assistance requires that women, girls, boys and men have equal access to and benefit from services and are not exposed to risks, including gender-based violence. Humanitarian organizations continue to provide capacity-building to partners to strengthen gender equality programming. Advisers from the Gender Standby Capacity roster have been deployed to 28 humanitarian situations to support humanitarian country teams in applying gender equality programming in humanitarian action. Thousands of humanitarian actors have completed the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender e-learning course. In 2010 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee "gender marker" — a tool to improve humanitarian response by ensuring projects designed in the context of consolidated appeals processes and pooled funds fully take into account the different needs of women, girls, boys and men — was rolled out in 12 countries, resulting in a 300 per cent increase in the number of projects in which gender was mainstreamed.

77. Strengthened prevention and response to gender-based violence through regular coordination and targeted capacity development continue within the global protection cluster. A handbook for coordinating gender-based violence interventions and an Inter-Agency Standing Committee-endorsed training package were produced, while direct and timely field support was provided in five countries. A project on gender-based violence capacity development in humanitarian contexts was launched to strengthen the skills of humanitarian staff in addressing such violence in nine countries. The gender-based violence information management system, which is designed to collect and analyse standardized data on reported cases of such violence, is being used in five countries.

78. Integrating gender in inter-agency contingency planning and preparedness work is essential. Technical support is being provided through the Gender Standby Capacity programme to the Pacific and Southern African regions to support national capacity. Innovative strategies have also improved analysis in terms of who is impacted by crises and how involving all segments of the community improves contingency planning and response.

79. Cooking fuel remains a critical issue that touches on nearly every facet of daily life for millions of families. Because they are primarily responsible for collecting firewood and cooking, women and children are particularly vulnerable to a range of risks, including respiratory infections, rape and sexual assault, missed educational opportunities and environmental destruction. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in

[4] See CEB/2009/1.

Humanitarian settings has ensured that the new Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves places a strong emphasis on a multisectoral approach to meeting cooking fuel needs in humanitarian emergencies and is now promoting efforts to ensure safe access to cooking fuel in crisis-affected settings around the world.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

80. On the basis of the above, I propose the following:

(a) Member States, non-State actors and humanitarian organizations are urged to promote greater respect for, and adherence to, the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;

(b) Safe, timely and unhindered access to vulnerable populations is a prerequisite for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. Member States are urged to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian personnel and supplies to affected communities;

(c) It is important that the United Nations system and humanitarian partners strengthen acceptance-based and principled measures that support the ability to maintain humanitarian presence and operations in high-risk environments. Security risk management should include promotion of acceptance by all relevant actors for humanitarian action, in particular through outreach to local communities, and be continually informed by ongoing context analysis;

(d) Member States are urged to continually reinforce their commitment to principled humanitarian action, including by ensuring adequate resources for comprehensive approaches to security risk management as part of humanitarian programming budgets, and to invest in further strengthening the United Nations security management system;

(e) It is important that the United Nations system strengthen the capacity for humanitarian leadership in emergencies, in particular the resident/humanitarian coordinator system, as well as humanitarian coordination mechanisms, including for the transition phase, including in support of national and local authorities as appropriate;

(f) Member States, the United Nations system and partners are encouraged to increase support for preparedness activities, including through strengthening partnerships with development organizations, and to further strengthen regional, national and local capacities and preparedness for responding to humanitarian emergencies. Member States should also consider additional ways of assessing progress in strengthening their preparedness levels for emergency response;

(g) Member States, the United Nations system and both humanitarian and development partners are encouraged to continue strengthening preparedness and risk reduction by further developing mechanisms to effectively detect and address humanitarian needs arising from the interaction of global challenges and other structural or chronic vulnerabilities;

(h) Member States are called upon to maintain a diversity of humanitarian funding channels, and to provide consistent and predictable support to these channels to meet existing and growing humanitarian needs. This includes the provision of early and multi-year commitments to humanitarian pooled funds as

well as support to humanitarian agencies' individual emergency reserves and other sources of funding for humanitarian programmes;

(i) Member States, the United Nations system and humanitarian partners are encouraged to continue to identify solutions to improve financing mechanisms to respond to transition; and Member States are encouraged to strengthen efforts to provide appropriate and flexible financing for preparedness activities;

(j) Member States and humanitarian organizations are reminded of the fundamental need to maintain the civilian character of emergency humanitarian assistance, and are asked to ensure that the use of foreign military assets is appropriate, timely, unique in capability and availability, and only at the request or with the consent of the affected State, in conformity with international law and humanitarian principles, as well as internationally established guidelines, such as the Oslo Guidelines, the MCDA Guidelines and country/context-specific guidance where present;

(k) Member States are encouraged to consult the humanitarian community and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, through established structures, when considering the deployment of foreign military assets to support humanitarian assistance, necessary to ensure appropriate resources are deployed to meet specific humanitarian needs;

(l) Member States are urged to strengthen efforts to address sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, including by preventing, investigating and prosecuting such violence in humanitarian emergencies, and ensure services to victims;

(m) The United Nations and humanitarian partners will strengthen the use of sex and age disaggregated data and continue to implement gender marker tools in humanitarian funding mechanisms in order to track funding allocations to gender and gender-based violence programming.